

Imam Ali (a.s.); The True Successor of the Holy Prophet (.s.a.w

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During the time of the three Kholafa, although Ali (a.s.) did not take part in any of the battles, he was always available when they sought his advice on religious matters. His position as the jurist was on the top of the list among the companions of the Holy Prophet (saw). Umar Ibne Khattab the 2nd Caliph had given clear instructions that when Ali was present in the mosque of the Prophet no one should take precedence over him in answering questions on religious matters. In one such encounter during the time of the 2nd Caliph, a group of Jewish scholars approached the caliph and said, " We have a few questions. If we get the answers to these questions correctly, we will accept the Islamic faith. "Ask whatever you want to ask," said the caliph. They asked the following questions.

1. What are the locks and keys of heaven?
2. Who was the messenger who was neither of the human nor of the Jinn and who warned his people?
3. Which are the 5 beings who were created without the aid of ovaries?
- 4 What are one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven and twelve?

The caliph thought over these questions for a time, then said, "I do not know the answers to these questions. I will take you to a man who is most knowledgeable in the commandments of Allah and the Holy Prophet and the greatest among us. The caliph then brought the Jewish scholars to Ali (a.s.). They asked the same questions to him. Ali (a.s.) answered thus:

1. The locks of the heavens are beliefs in more than one god, and its keys are the letters of "La Ilaha Illallah, Muhammad-Ur-Rasulallah."
2. The messenger who warned his people is the ant who, when Solomon's army was passing by, said to his people, " Enter your houses so that the army may not stamp you out (without intention)". So Allah states in the Holy Qur'an, " Until they came to the valley of the Ants, said an ant (addressing the other ants of the valley) O" you ants' enter into your dwellings, so that Solomon and his hosts may not crush you while they know it not". (Sura An-Naml. V 18)
3. The five beings who were not born of ovaries are: Adam, Eve, the staff of Moses which used to change into a python, the camel of Saleh, and the sheep of Ibrahim (which was sent by Allah to become a ransom of the life of Ibrahim's son Ismael).
4. One is Allah who has no partners, two are Adam and Eve, three are the substances (i.e.

non-living matter, plants and animals), four are the Heavenly books: Torah of Moses, Bible of Jesus, Zubur of Dawood and the Qur'an of Hadhrat Muhammad (saw). Five are the daily prayers. Six are the days of creation of the heavens and earth, as per the verse of the Qur'an: "And indeed We created the heavens and the earth and what is between them two, in six periods and touched us not any fatigue." (Sura Qaf V. 38). Seven are the seven heavens, in the light of the Qur'anic Verse: "And we have erected above you the seven strong ones." (Sura An-Naba V12)

Eight are those angels who bear the heavens, as per the Qur'anic Verse: "And the angels shall be on the side of it; and above them shall bear that day `Arsh' (the throne of authority). of your Lord, eight of them (Sura Al-Haaqqah. V.17) Nine are the nine signs given to Moses as stated by God: "And indeed we gave Moses nine clear signs (miracles); so ask the children of Israel when he came to them, Pharaoh said to him; "Verily I deem you O' Moses one bewitched." (Sura Bani Israel, V 101). Ten are the ten days, i.e. God had promised Moses that he would stay on the mountain of Toor for thirty days, and later added ten more days to this duration, as it is stated in the Qur'an.

"And we made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights and completed it with ten more;" Thus was completed the term of his Lord, forty nights, and (before he went up) Moses said to his brother Aaron: You take my place among my people, act rightly and follow not the path of the mischief-makers." (Sura Al-A'araf. V.142). Eleven are the brothers of Joseph, son of Jacob, as the Qur'an states, "When said Joseph to his father, O' my father; Verily I did see (dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon,, I saw them all prostrating to me." (Sura Yousuf. V.4). Twelve are the Twelve water-springs manifested by the staff of Moses, as God states, "And (remember) when Moses sought water for his people; said We, `Strike the rock with your staff' Then gushed out therefrom twelve springs; each people knew their drinking place; "Eat and drink God's provision, and commit not evil in the earth acting mischievously." (Sura Al Baqarah V60).

When the Jewish scholars heard the replies of Hadhrat Ali (a.s.) they said, "We bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (saw) is His Messenger and Ali (a.s.) is the "Wasi" and successor of the Messenger of Allah as Aaron was the Wasi of Moses. They all embraced Islam, went back to their tribe and converted all of them to Islam.

((Kaukabe Durri